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ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Argentina, Austria, Belgium,* Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Guatemala,* Italy, Mozambique, Peru,* Poland,* Portugal,* Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Venezuela: draft resolution

1997/... Assistance to States in strengthening the rule of law

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling that, by adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Firmly convinced that, as stressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the rule of law is an essential factor in the protection of human rights and should continue to attract the attention of the international community,

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* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Convinced also that through their own national legal and judicial systems States must provide appropriate civil, criminal and administrative remedies for violations of human rights,

Recognizing the importance of the role that can be played by the Centre for Human Rights in supporting national efforts to strengthen the institutions of the rule of law,

Bearing in mind that, in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly entrusted the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with, inter alia, providing, through the Centre for Human Rights and other appropriate institutions, advisory services and technical and financial assistance in the field of human rights, enhancing international cooperation for the promotion and protection of all human rights and coordinating human rights activities throughout the United Nations system,

Recalling the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights that a comprehensive programme be established within the United Nations and under the coordination of the Centre for Human Rights with a view to helping States in the task of building and strengthening adequate national structures which have a direct impact on the overall observance of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law,

Recalling also its resolution 1996/56 of 19 April 1996 and General Assembly resolution 51/96 of 12 December 1996,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/51/555), submitted in conformity with Assembly resolution 50/179 of 22 December 1995;

2. Takes note with interest of the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General for strengthening the programme of advisory services and technical assistance of the Centre for Human Rights in order to comply fully with the recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights concerning assistance to States in strengthening their institutions which uphold the rule of law;

3. Praises the efforts made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights to accomplish their ever-increasing tasks with the limited financial and personnel resources at their disposal;

4. Expresses its deep concern at the scarcity of means at the disposal of the Centre for the fulfilment of its tasks;

5. Notes that the programme of advisory services and technical assistance does not have assistance funds sufficient to provide any substantial financial assistance to national projects that have a direct impact on the realization of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law in countries that are committed to those ends, but which face economic hardship;

6. Affirms that the High Commissioner, with the assistance of the Centre, remains the focal point for coordinating system-wide attention for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

7. Welcomes the consultations and contacts initiated by the High Commissioner with other relevant bodies and programmes of the United Nations system aiming at the enhancement of inter-agency coordination and cooperation in providing assistance for the strengthening of the rule of law;

8. Encourages the High Commissioner to pursue these consultations, taking into account the need to explore new synergies with other organs and agencies of the United Nations system with a view to obtaining increased financial assistance for human rights and the rule of law;

9. Also encourages the High Commissioner to continue to explore the possibility of further contact with and support of financial institutions, acting within their mandates, with a view to obtaining technical and financial means to strengthen the capacity of the Centre to provide assistance to national projects aiming at the realization of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law;

10. Requests the High Commissioner to accord high priority to the technical cooperation activities undertaken by the Centre with regard to the rule of law;

11. Takes note with appreciation of the proposal of the High Commissioner to convene a high-level meeting of relevant United Nations agencies and programmes in order to analyse means, modalities, financing and allocation of responsibilities for the implementation of a comprehensive United Nations programme of assistance for the rule of law, taking into account the experience of the technical cooperation programme of the Centre;

12. Decides to continue its consideration of the question of assistance to States in strengthening the rule of law at its fifty-fifth session in the light of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session pursuant to Assembly resolution 51/96 as well as any relevant information that might be provided by the High Commissioner on Human Rights on this matter.